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PIEDMONT LAUREATE PROGRAM EXPANDS TO FIVE CENTRAL NORTH CAROLINA COUNTIES

Two arts councils representing Johnston and Alamance Counties are the latest agencies to agree to support the Piedmont Laureate Program. They will join the City of Raleigh Arts Commission, Durham Arts Council, Orange County Arts Commission, and United Arts Council of Raleigh & Wake County.

Started in 2008, the Piedmont Laureate Program is dedicated to building a literary bridge for residents to come together and celebrate the art of writing. The key goal of the program is "to promote awareness and heighten appreciation for excellence in the literary arts throughout the Piedmont region" of North Carolina.

Applications for the 2010 Laureate are now being accepted only from novelists residing in Alamance, Durham, Johnston, Orange, and Wake counties. (The program focuses each year on a different literary form.) The novelist, to be selected by a committee appointed by the sponsoring agencies, will present public readings and workshops, participate at select public functions, and create at least one original activity to expand appreciation of literature. The 2010 Piedmont Laureate will receive a stipend of \$7,000 and serve for one year, from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2010.

"The Piedmont Laureate program is an important new platform enabling writers to connect directly with area residents through readings, workshops, school programs and other outreach activities," said author Richard Krawiec, a panelist on the 2009 Piedmont Laureate selection committee that chose poet Jaki Shelton Green to serve as the first laureate.

“It’s wonderful that our local arts agencies have been able to collaborate to make this program happen and showcase the rich literary talent of the Piedmont. Within the next decade this program will prove to be one of the most important literary endeavors in the state, and is sure to become a model nationally,” added Mr. Krawiec.

Additional information on the Piedmont Laureate program, including guidelines and the application form, is available at www.piedmontlaureate.com and at sponsoring agencies’ websites, including the City of Raleigh Arts Commission’s webpage at www.raleighnc.gov/arts. The deadline to apply is Sept. 18.

For more information, contact Belva Parker, program coordinator for the City of Raleigh Arts Commission, at belva.parker@ci.raleigh.nc.us or 996-3610.

The City of Raleigh Arts Commission, established in 1977 as the official advisory body and advocate for the arts to the Raleigh City Council, proudly holds the distinction of being the first municipal arts commission created in North Carolina. Serving as the leading force to champion the arts with Raleigh citizens and their representatives, the Commission’s myriad activities foster, support, and promote the arts in the Capital City.